

Message

From: Wirick, Holiday [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=CB8297D55F314BDD8AE914EED7EF14E5-HWIRICK]
Sent: 10/2/2020 11:09:10 PM
To: Wax, Peter N. [pwax@nd.gov]
Subject: Question re comments from ND permit lead

Hi Pete, I hope you have some fun weekend plans that you've already begun to enjoy!

I'd like to run something by you....

I shared ND's proposed WQS amendments with EPA Region 8's ND permit lead, Alysia Tien, an extremely smart, amazing woman, who provided a couple of general comments (below). The first comment addresses interpretation of the temperature limit, which seems to align with your concern about meeting the temperature criterion in winter. Alysia's other comment addresses the designation for "b" of "domestic drinking water."

My question is whether these comments are something you'd just like to discuss - i.e., issues to be considered in future WQS revisions, or do you think it would be useful to include them in our comment letter?

Here are Alysia's comments:

1. In permit reviews I have done, the interpretation of the temperature limit in Table 1 has been difficult- in particular the second part of the limit since temperatures can fluctuate with seasonal changes quite a bit and there is nothing in the limit that indicates how "natural background conditions" should be calculated/assessed. It can be difficult to figure out what is reasonably acceptable in permits when general terminology like this is used - when there are large fluctuations in temperature it can be difficult to set a reasonable and enforceable limit to "natural background conditions" especially since seasonal temperature changes are not easily predictable (e.g. cold/snow in spring, hot temps carrying into fall, winters warmer than normal, etc). Would suggest adding more specifics as what "natural background conditions" means and how it is calculated/assessed (unless this is something from the Standards program perspective that is already really well defined and I may just not be aware of it).

"Eighty-five degrees Fahrenheit [29.44 degrees Celsius]. The maximum increase shall not be greater than five degrees Fahrenheit [2.78 degrees Celsius] above natural background conditions."

2. In Table 1 under the heading "Substance or Characteristic", I have had confusion on the designation for "b" of "domestic drinking water". That terminology threw me off as it makes me think of safe drinking water act program limits/regs, but these would not be applicable. When I asked some ND permit writers what that was supposed to be in reference to, they were not really sure either, so it does not seem clear as to what/why "drinking water" is being referenced there (or maybe some ND permitting folks are aware of what it means and I just spoke with someone that was not sure). If it is not clear to you all, I would recommend that reference be clarified to help explain what it is exactly referring to as related to the limits listed in the table, that would be helpful to understand implementation/justification for these limits in permits. (Again, I may just not be familiar with what this is referring to so maybe you could just help walk me through it if it is clear from your program's perspective?)

Thanks Pete. Have a fun and fabulous weekend!

Holly Wirick
Water Quality Section
U.S. EPA - Region 8
1595 Wynkoop Street
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 312-6238